lation of Brick Kilns on The Cultivable Land

1119. SHRI SANJAY DALMIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that the installation of brick kilns on the cultivable land is spreading pollution;

(b) if so, the loss of total national agricultural production due to installation of kilns on the cultivable land;

(c) the name of the authority which permits installation of the kilns on the cultivable land; and

(d) the action being taken by Government in this regard and the steps proposed to be taken to shift these kilns on the land unsuitable for agriculture?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) (a) and (b) Emission from brick kilns have detrimental effect on the wields of wheat and rice grown in fields adjacent to these kilns. However, no statistical data is available so as to estimate the loss of total national agricultural production due to installation of kilns on cultivable lands.

(c) The District Authorities in the State Government issue licenses for operation of the brick kilns.

(d) Action taken by Government to prevent and control pollution from brick kilns include:

1. Minimal National Standards for brick kilns have been notified.
2. Stack heights have been notified for optional dispersion of particulate matter.
3. In order to protect the top soil, new technology is being promoted for replacement of clay by fly ash and other wastes.
4. The brick kilns are being encouraged to be set up on the waste land or near the thermal power stations.

National Conservation Strategy on Environment

1120. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the national conservation strategy and policy on environment and development; and

(b) the steps taken towards strengthening of pollution control machinery?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) (a) The National Conservation Strategy and Policy Statement on Environment and Development was drafted in June, 1992 as a comprehensive document to address the environmental issues for sustainable development. The document was laid on the Table of Lok Sabha on 21.7.92 and Rajya Sabha on 22.7.92

(b) The State Pollution Control Borards and Pollution Control Committees are the agencies involved in the pollution control activity in the States. The Ministry of Environment and Forests have taken the steps to strengthen the pollution control machinery by providing them financial and technical support as given in the statement *(See* below)

Statement

1. Financial assistance is provided to the Pollution Control Boards and the Pollution Control Committees for purchase of essential laboratory equipments, to conduct specific time-bound studies and projects.

2. Air and water quality monitoring equipment, laboratory building, training of officers of the State Pollution control Borads and Pollution Control Committees are provided under the World Bank aided Industrial Pollution Control and Pollution Prevention projects.

3. 75% of the Water cess collected by State Pollution Control Boards and Pollution Control Committees are reimbursed to augment their financial resources subject to fulfilment of certain conditions.

The cess amount has been increased approximately three folds to the original amount in 1992 for this purpose.

4. The State Governments have been requested to enhance the budgetary provisions of the respective State Pollution Control Boards and to allow them to create new posts for effective functioning.

5. A study has also been conducted by the Administrative Staff College, Hyderabad on the strengthening of the Pollution Control Boards. The report has been prepared based on a detailed study of four Pollution Control Boards namely Gujarat, Maharastra, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. The salient features of the report inter-alia are:

(i) suggestions have been made for policy changes like preparation of Annual Environmental Quality Report by Pollution Control Boards (PCBs) transforming the reglatory focus to technical competence focus in the PCBs Preparation of comprehensive programmes for pollution control have been proposed involving pollution source inventorisation, pollution control plans etc., by PCBs. Operational changes have been suggested in functioning of the State.

(ii) The strengthening of infrastructure in terms of technical manpower and equipment of the State Pollution Control Boards have been suggested.

(iii) The role of Central Pollution Control Board and other agencies have been mentioned with respect to providing technical support including human resource development.

(iv) Introduction of mass standards, preparation of area specific environment plans, inventorisation of pollution source, hazardous waste management etc., are some of the major areas for development.

Area Covered by Forests

1121. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that the area covered by forests in India is 64 million ha. i.e. 19.47% of the country land out of which 31 million ha. consists of degraded forests; and

(b) if so, whether there is any programme to increase the density of these degraded forests?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) (a) As per State of Forest Report, 1995, the forest cover in the country is 63.96 million ha. i.e. 19.46% of the geographical area, out of which 24.93 million ha. consists of degraded forests.

(b) Following programmes are undertaken for increasing the density of forests:

(i) Extensive afforestation programmes are undertaken by State Governments from their own resources as well as with financial assistance from Government of India for afforestation, protection of forests and restoration of ecological balance;

(ii) Various Externally Aided projects in the forestry sector are being implemented for increasing the density of degraded forests;

(iii) Guidelines have been issued to all the State Governments to involve village communities for the regeneration of degraded forests through Joint Forest Management.

National Forestry Action Plan

1122. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a National Forestry Action Plan with the assistance of UNDP and FAO was signed in June 1993; and

(b) if so, what are the results achieved so far?